

# Bi-Annual Newsletter



July 2025



*Whispers  
of the  
Sacred  
Earth*

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## THREADS OF IMPACT

Dear Reader,

Welcome to *Threads of Impact*, where we celebrate the inspiring journeys from ICE project areas. Through engaging local communities and mobilizing groups and networks, ICE witnesses how collective action transforms lives and landscapes. Each story reflects ICE mission to enhance the resilience of ecological systems and community livelihoods, drawing strength from diverse knowledge systems. We hope these stories ignite hope and inspire continued change.

Enjoy reading!

Carol Njagi,  
Communications and Gender officer,  
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## ICE Partners





## Whispers of the Sacred Earth: The Enduring Harmony of Tharaka-Nithi Culture

In the heart of Kenya, where the foothills of Mount Kenya meet the plains, lies Tharaka-Nithi, a land rich in cultural heritage and deeply rooted traditions. Here, the beauty of African culture shines through the profound connection between the people and their environment. For generations, the Tharaka-Nithi community has lived in harmony with nature, their practices interwoven with a deep respect for the land and a commitment to preserving its sanctity.

**“...certain places are set aside, honored, and protected as vital links to the past, present, and future.”**



Mzee Augustus Mwarania- Chairman of Kayu ka Muuro wa Kathita



World Water Day 2025 celebrations at the Manyirani sacred site.

This reverence is particularly evident in their relationship with sacred sites. These are not merely geographical locations; they are living embodiments of history, spirituality, and communal identity. *“While specific names of sites might resonate within local knowledge and oral traditions, the underlying principle remains clear: certain places are set aside, honored, and protected as vital links to the past, present, and future”* says mzee Mwarania. He further asserts that the Kathita River stands as a powerful symbol of this sacred connection. Its waters, flowing through the heart of Tharaka-Nithi, are treated with immense respect, seen as a source of life and a place of spiritual significance.

This reverence for water is a testament to the traditional ecological knowledge that guides their lives – understanding the delicate balance of nature and the importance of its preservation. *“The protection of these sacred spaces extends beyond mere avoidance. It involves intricate cultural practices and beliefs that actively contribute to environmental conservation,”* adds Mwarania.

**The protection  
of these sacred  
spaces extends  
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avoidance...**

Traditional customs often dictate how resources can be used, ensuring sustainability and preventing overexploitation. Elders, as custodians of this knowledge, play a crucial role in guiding the community and upholding these traditions. The beauty of Tharaka-Nithi culture lies in this holistic approach. It's a world where spirituality and environmentalism are not separate entities, but rather intertwined facets of a shared existence. The sacred sites serve as focal points for this harmony.



Manyirani sacred site

They are reminders of the community's ancestral ties, beacons of their spiritual beliefs, and natural sanctuaries that contribute to the region's biodiversity. As you gaze upon the images of the Manyirani Sacred Site, consider the generations of respect and care that have shaped this place. Recognize the inherent beauty in a culture that understands the profound value of preserving its natural heritage, not just for its own sake, but for the well-being of future generations. The story of Tharaka Nithi is a testament to the enduring power of African wisdom, a whisper from the sacred earth reminding us of the vital connection between culture and conservation.



Tharaka Nithi County officials planting trees at Manyirani sacred site



## Where Diversity Thrives, Abundance Follows: Witnessing an Agricultural Renaissance in Murang'a



Beans and maize thriving together: an example of intercropping for resilient farming systems.

**Imagine** stepping into a living, breathing canvas of agriculture. Here, the stately stalks of maize stand shoulder to shoulder with the vibrant, emerald leaves of sukuma wiki (kale). Delicate tendrils of climbing beans snake upwards, promising a future harvest, while the air hums with the sweet perfume of ripe pawpaws and the silent anticipation of plump avocados from young, thriving trees.

Even the very earth beneath your feet is a testament to life, carpeted in a protective layer of ground cover, punctuated by the deliberate placement of trees that whisper tales of ecological harmony.

*"I once believed that focusing on one or two main crops was the path to success,"* Erastus reflects, his gaze sweeping across his flourishing domain.

Inspired, Erastus embraced the art and science of agroecology. He learned to harness nature's own resources, crafting potent bio-inputs and nourishing bio-fertilizers from materials readily available in his community. The impact has been nothing short of transformative.

*"My soil breathes again!"* Erastus declares, his fingers delving into the rich, dark loam. *"It's alive, teeming with unseen helpers. My crops are stronger, healthier, naturally resilient to challenges, and the harvest... it surpasses anything I ever imagined possible on this land."*

**My soil breathes again... My crops are stronger, healthier, naturally resilient to challenges.**



Mr. Erastus- Murang'a organic farmer.

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## Policy to Practice: Murang'a Advances Agroecology Agenda

The momentum behind Murang'a County's ambitious Agroecology Policy gained further traction last month as key actors and stakeholders convened for a crucial workshop focused on its operationalization. The event, supported by the Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE), brought together a diverse group dedicated to championing sustainable agriculture in the region.

In a session graced by Prof. Kiringai Kamau, the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Devolution & External Linkages and Partnerships, alongside Director Daniel Gitahi and Dr. Peter Muchiri, the County Director of Agriculture, participants rigorously validated a vital tool designed to guide engagement throughout the implementation of the groundbreaking policy, which was launched in 2023.



During the Agroecology actors mapping report validation workshop

*"This operationalization tool is our roadmap," emphasized Prof. Kamau during the workshop. "It ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and understand their roles in making the vision of the Agroecology Policy a reality for the farmers and the people of Murang'a."*

A significant highlight of the workshop was the validation of an innovative actor mapping tool.

The tool was developed Stakeholders of the Murang'a agroecology platform and is instrumental in the policy's success. This operationalization tool is our roadmap," emphasized Prof. Kamau during the workshop. *"It ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and understand their roles in making the vision of the Agroecology Policy a reality for the farmers and the people of Murang'a."*

By systematically identifying and mapping the various individuals, organizations, and groups actively involved or with a stake in agroecology within the county, it aims to foster better collaboration, avoid duplication of efforts, and ensure a more coordinated and effective implementation process.

*"The actor mapping tool is invaluable," stated Prof. Kiringai Kamau. "It provides us with a clear picture of the agroecology landscape in Murang'a. This will allow us to strategically engage with all relevant players, from farmers and researchers to civil society organizations and the private sector, ensuring a unified and impactful approach."*



## Witnessing an Agricultural Renaissance in Murang'a

With these key operational and mapping tools validated, Murang'a County, with the continued support of ICE, is taking significant strides in translating its ambitious agroecology policy into tangible action on the ground, paving the way for a greener, healthier, and more prosperous future for its agricultural communities.

**This will allow us to strategically engage with all relevant players, from farmers and researchers to civil society organizations and the private sector, ensuring a unified and impactful approach.**



Prof. Kiringai Kamau during the validation workshop

Mr. Peter Muchiri reiterated the importance of inclusivity: *"The beauty of agroecology lies in its holistic nature. This mapping tool will help us ensure that no one is left behind and that the diverse knowledge and expertise within our county are harnessed for the successful adoption of sustainable farming practices."*

**The beauty of agroecology lies in its holistic nature...**



Director Peter Muchiri during the validation workshop





*Thank you for reading!*

...and stay tuned for more.

## Threads of Impact

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